

NEW WAY OF DOING BUSINESS

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ABSTRACT

For the Department of Energy, planning for the transition of contaminated nuclear weapons development and production facilities to alternative non-nuclear uses involves an entirely new way of doing business. The openness of the Department's operations and the subsequent growth of public awareness and interests has created new and complex challenges in planning the transition of surplus facilities.

The Office of Facility Transition and Management has been established to ensure that contaminated surplus facilities are transferred in a safe and cost-effective manner, while considering their future alternative uses and minimizing the resulting impacts to the current workforce and the local communities. The transition program includes technical, landlord, human resources, legal, and economic aspects that are tightly intertwined with an extensive gamut of consequential health, safety, funding, socioeconomic, regulatory concerns, and institutional issues that need to be dealt with concurrently.

INTRODUCTION

For the Department of Energy (DOE), planning for the transition of contaminated nuclear weapons development and production facilities to alternative uses involves an expanding new way of doing business. Following the recent changes in global politics and the defense needs of the United States, the Department of Energy's defense mission has been redefined and is significantly being curtailed. Furthermore, DOE has made the commitment to take care of the workers who have helped win the Cold War and the surplus facilities resulting from this transfer. The openness of DOE's downsizing and the subsequent growth of public awareness and interest has created new and difficult challenges in planning the transition of DOE's surplus capabilities, to include workers, equipment, and physical structures.

Current programs conducting Waste Management, Environmental Restoration, and Technology Development cannot afford to redirect resources and efforts to fulfill the requirements needed for Facility Transition. Moreover, there are many reasons not to have an already established organization take the lead with facility transition, such as: there are many unknowns about the facilities involved that will be subject to the transition process, e.g., the exact number of facilities and their physical condition, and the array of resources needed just to get these facilities to a safe deactivation condition. Facility Transition needs to stand alone in Budget and Reporting so that funding issues will not affect programs that are ongoing in environmental cleanup.

As a result, the Secretary of Energy established the Office of Facility Transition and Management, EM-60, as a line organization within the Office of Environmental Restoration and Waste Management (EM). The Office of Facility Transition and Management is headed by a Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) with three direct reporting offices: the Office of Facility Policy, Planning and Acceptance; the Office of Technical and Program Support; and the Office of Site and Facility Transfer. Figure 1 shows the organizational structure of the Office of Facility Transition and Management.

The Office of Facility Transition and Management's unique mission and scope of work does not endow redundancies to the EM program, but on the contrary, it serves as an interface with the donor Program Secretarial Office (PSO) to encourage the continued use of workers for the new mission, to receive buildings and surplus facilities, to cooperate with the local communities, and to begin to gain consensus to

understand and plan for future site use while managing the surplus facilities responsibility.

The Office of Facility Transition and Management is faced with the challenge of bringing contaminated buildings and facilities, declared surplus to their original mission, to an environmentally safe state while ensuring the right opportunities and programs are developed for training and retraining of the current work force in the new EM activities; to guarantee the affected communities, and the general public with a technically sound and regulatory compliant program; and to plan and carry on aggressive economic development of these sites in a cost-effective way.

As some sites have begun to undertake development and implementation of facility transition plans, the communities surrounding them have become very aware of the economic and social impacts they may encounter as missions change and some operations are phased out. Along with the economic fear, the communities and the stakeholders (i.e., those entities and individuals that are affected) are concerned about DOE's commitment to cleanup. EM has developed programmatic guidance for the facility transition process which will ensure that affected and interested parties receive information and have the opportunity to actively communicate their concerns during the transition period. By means of this communication avenue, the program will build a foundation accommodating the stakeholders, and DOE's interests and concerns, as well as support the required budgetary claims to Congress.

As an example, currently EM provides some support to the Rocky Flats Local Impacts Initiative. The Rocky Flats Local Impacts Initiative is a broad-based coalition of local governments, unions, community-based public interest groups and private sector interests formed to serve as liaison between the stakeholders' interests and DOE. It serves as the voice for the local community as it defines the impacts and identifies the opportunities that the change in mission will bring to the community.

ELEMENTS OF FACILITY TRANSITION

Since the Office of Facility Transition and Management was being conceptualized as part of the EM organization, the challenges to transition planning and the subsequent management during the transition process have led the analytical efforts. The transition process is defined as the set of steps a facility undergoes between the end of its original mission and the transfer to its final use. This may be to convert to a cleanup use, go to decontamination and decommission (D&D) status,

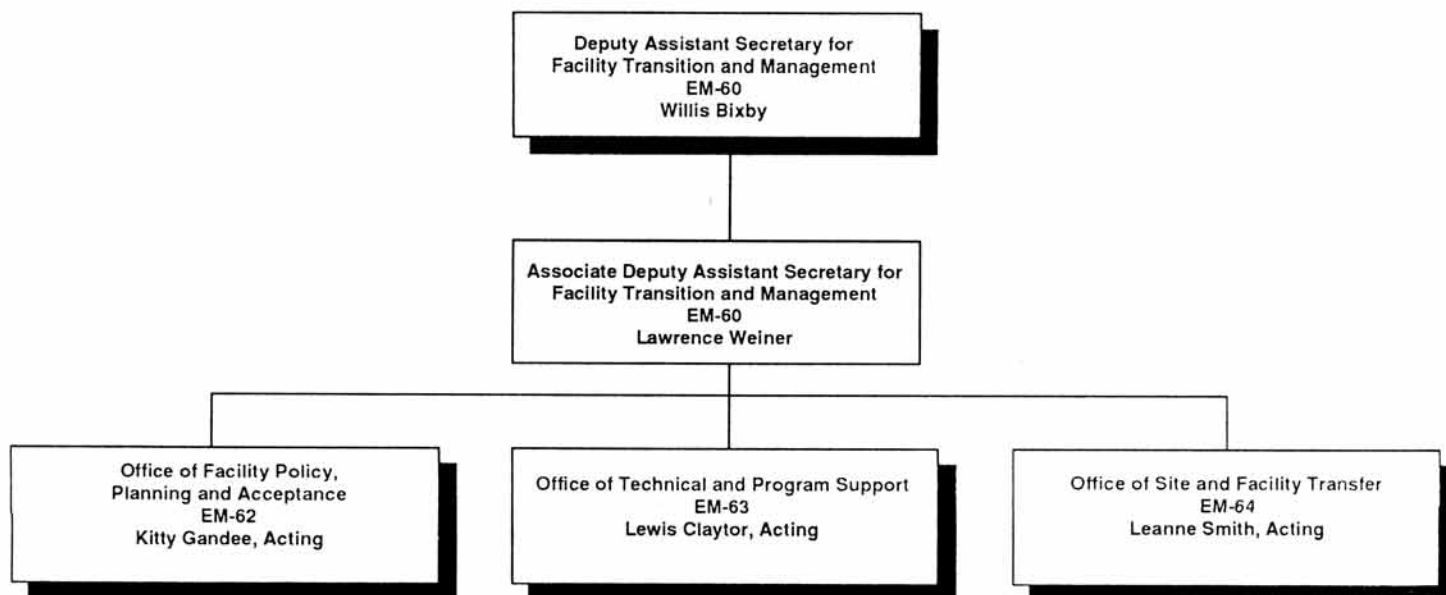


Fig. 1. Organizational structure of the Office of Facility Transition and Management.

utilize an alternative function of the facility through economic development alternatives, or establish use by another governmental entity. The new scope of transition then is a stand-alone process to plan, receive, deactivate, and put facilities in a safe condition until their final status is determined.

Big challenges and concerns of the program are: (1) applying the Transition Standards Identification Program (TSIP) to deactivating facilities (details on this program are covered in functional areas), (2) continuing to keep the work force useful on-site, in the local community, or at another DOE site, (3) developing guidelines to support Economic Development, and (4) obtaining Congressional support to manage programs that are responsible to regulatory agencies and that take into consideration the "taxpayer pocketbook." An example of such a program is the full deactivation of the Plutonium Uranium Extraction (PUREX) at Hanford, a program that is to bring PUREX to an environmentally sound, stable, standby state with minimal cost while awaiting D&D. The deactivation of PUREX is expected to drop annual costs by 90%.

The mission of the Office of Facility Transition and Management is unique from that of Waste Management and Decontamination and Decommissioning carried on by the Office of Waste Management, EM-30, and the Office of Environmental Restoration, EM-40, respectively, within the EM program. The Office of Facility Transition and Management does not have the responsibility for performing D&D, does not remediate soil and groundwater on the transferred facilities, does not treat the waste and dispose of it, and does not manage spent fuel or develop new technologies for EM operations.

FUNCTIONAL AREAS

The responsibilities falling under the Office of Facility Transition and Management's purview are being managed, as mentioned earlier, by three distinct Offices. The Office of Facility Policy, Planning, and Acceptance is directly responsible for developing the policy for installation/facility acceptance by EM; negotiating the transfer with the transferring PSO; developing and implementing a process in conjunction with the affected site to define the end state condition of the transferred site; and developing and implementing a site-wide

systems engineering planning process. In addition, this office has the function of providing guidance for the development of Transition Plans, providing guidance for planning the Site Mission Plans and Road maps, maintaining a surplus facility inventory, and developing an approach for meeting criteria set by the Office of Environmental Restoration for D&D or for releasing former DOE facilities/installations to the private sector.

The Office of Technical and Program Support has the responsibility to provide the technical, management, financial and program support to the line organizations that comprise the Office of Facility Transition and Management. The Office of Technical and Program Support conducts characterizations to determine and verify the physical condition and compliance status of the surplus facilities proposed to transfer to EM. This characterization is performed in a three step process: first, there is a Quick Look Review of the surplus facility to gather basic information of its status. A Pre-Turnover Review follows prior to the actual transfer, and its main purpose is to identify potential risks and liabilities that EM will inherit after transferring the surplus facilities. The information collected at the Pre-Turnover review will yield estimates of time and cost of the clean-up activities. A Post-Turnover Review is done after the surplus facility has been accepted by the Office of Facility Transition and Management and is executed as part of the planning process to identify scope of work and budgetary issues.

Several Quick Look and Pre-Turnover Reviews have been accomplished by the Office of Facility Transition and Management at different facilities to support the transition process. Pre-Turnover Reviews were conducted at the Idaho Chemical Processing Plant and at the Rocky Flats Plant (RFP) in Golden, Colorado, preceding the recent transition of buildings that were surplus to the Defense Production Program because of contamination from the manufacturing and processing operations of radioactive materials. The Office of Technical and Program Support is also responsible for recommending technical and financial actions to reduce the out-year surveillance and maintenance costs and Environmental, Safety, and Health (ES&H) risk for inactive facilities, as well as for coordinating the submission of the annual update

of the Five-Year Plan, and the financial management and procurement activities.

The Office of Site and Facility Transfer is responsible for the day-to-day management of facilities transferred to the Office of Facility Transition and Management, to include Facility Operations, Engineering and Real Estate Management, and full budget responsibility. The Office of Site and Facility Transfer is subdivided in five divisions that oversee eight field offices and 20 installations in which DOE conducts operations. The functional responsibilities of the Office of Site and Facility Transfer, as those of a Prince, were inherited at birth, partly discovered throughout an exciting but rapid childhood, and faced with the overwhelming range of duties at the time of investiture.

The Office of Site and Facility Transfer oversees facility operation during deactivation; manages surplus materials, compliance plans, and construction projects; implements recommendations by the Defense Nuclear Facility Safety Board (DNFSB); develops Reports to Congress, Landlord programs, performance indicators, Activity Data Sheets (ADS), Safety Evaluation Reports, Program Execution Guidance (PEG), Worker Training programs; develops and defends Budget proposals; conducts Worker and Community Outreach programs; oversees site-specific economic development, and insures displaced worker considerations are a priority.

ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM

The facility transition process starts when EM receives a notification from any other PSO within the Department requesting the transfer of a facility that has been declared surplus to its original mission. Right after the notification has been made, the resources to transfer to EM are identified to include budget and personnel, the exact number of facilities transferring and the status of the facilities. This step is followed by a formal transfer in which the Deputy Assistant Secretary and EM's Assistant Secretary officially agree upon the exchange of responsibilities and then apprise the Secretary. Once the facility belongs to EM, the deactivation process starts to prepare the facility for alternative use or D&D. This process is followed by a period where the proper Surveillance and Maintenance activities will support and maintain the facility in a safe condition for what may be an extended period of time until formal D&D is initiated.

As mentioned earlier, some of the issues falling under the Office of Facility Transition and Management's responsibility umbrella attract a significant amount of attention from the public, Congress, and various federal and state agencies who have the oversight responsibility. EM needs the congressional backing to support a regulatory-responsible and credible program. The Office of Facility Transition and Management has committed to providing congressional-required reports detailing transition plans at the different sites being transferred.

The Transition Standards Identification Program (TSIP) needs to be demonstrated to the oversight organizations. TSIP is being piloted at Rocky Flats and its purpose is to apply the appropriate set of standards and requirements that are necessary and adequate to maintain the safety envelope (i.e., measures to control the hazards and unknowns) for discrete activities. TSIP's process uses a graded approach to identify these necessary standards and requirements and justifies these as adequate to control the safety envelope. TSIP is currently being piloted at Rocky Flats Plant, Building 779, one of the recently transferred buildings to EM.

As the mission of DOE changes from production to environmental cleanup, the skills necessary for the work force will need to evolve. The right employee retention selections need to be made while the current work forces are still at the sites, and the great challenge facing DOE and its contractors is to have these employees available and amenable to retraining. Reductions in production may result in possible layoffs, and it is the responsibility of the DOE to make every effort to ensure that the current workers are selected and evaluated for the new activities--it is of benefit to all the parties involved; i.e., DOE's cleanup program, workers, local communities. It is also the DOE's responsibility to ensure displaced workers receive the necessary retraining to gain other means of gainful employment in their local community. Consequently, training of the current work force is of the utmost importance to EM to ensure a smooth transition and reduce the number of displaced workers, which in turn will have an impact in the community's economy.

EM has posed four different avenues of training, all of which may include educational opportunities and programs: 1) entrepreneurship, 2) retraining for environmental cleanup jobs, 3) training for industrial jobs created through transition of sites to the private sector, and 4) training for local jobs for displaced workers. Currently at Rocky Flats, the Rocky Flats Institute offers undergraduate courses leading to an Associate of Science degree in hazardous material management and certificates in hazardous materials technology and radiation protection. Moreover, DOE is committed to providing assistance to displaced workers through academic and vocational counseling, individualized training programs, and a range of educational opportunities. The out-placement program will allow employees to select training that is most likely to prepare them for future employment before they are displaced.

As facilities undergo transition, some sites may be declared surplus to DOE and reused for economic development of the local community. This brings up the topic of Economic Development.

Surplus facilities may have potential use for commercial development. For instance, buildings at Rocky Flats previously involved in non-nuclear production have the potential for reuse which would allow these facilities to be made available for private use and should provide jobs and commerce, and reduce economic impact in the local community. This situation would be present at many other DOE sites when the decision to reduce production is made. Before the avenue for economic development of DOE sites is paved and fully operable, numerous policy questions need answers relative to surplus and reusing facilities: Can private sector tenants be brought into the National Priority List (NPL) superfund sites? What restriction would apply under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act? Could a portion of the property be used for alternative purposes including the lease of property to federal and private tenants? The Office of Facility Policy, Planning, and Acceptance is presently developing the required guidance to confront and explore economic development opportunities concurrently with deactivation.

Overseeing facility operations during the deactivation period is one of the main functions of the Office of Facility Transition and Management. Deactivation is the planned, controlled, and permanent cessation of those activities or operations at a facility which do not support the Environmental Restoration and Waste Management mission. During the deactivation period, project management principles are

applied to identify discrete actions in the work-scope and to resource load those actions, then schedule and manage them to completion. It is a prelude to facility reuse or formal D&D with the goal to place the facility in the safest condition at the lowest economically achievable condition.

FACILITY TRANSITION

The Office of Facility Transition and Management's unique mission and scope of work does not endow redundancies to the EM program but will:

1. Serve as an interface with the donor PSO;
2. Address economic and social impacts on surrounding communities;
3. Provide for displaced worker retraining, placement, and counseling;
4. Perform programmatic functions to deactivate the DOE surplus facilities to enable future use and support site cleanup.